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SUBJECT: NINEWA: TURKISH CONSULATE STANDS UP IN MOSUL

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader James Knight: 1.4 (B) and (D).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

Summary

¶1. (C) Turkish Consul General for Mosul Huseyn Botsali arrived in Mosul 10 February to assume permanent residence at the new GOT Consulate in Mosul. He met PRT Team Leader Knight at PRT offices 11 Feb to review administrative and support matters arising from his new status as our permanent interlocutor and neighbor -- the new Turkish Consulate is located immediately northeast of FOB Marez. We also reviewed several pending political issues, including the status of Makhmur refugee camp and the glacial pace of fuel deliveries from Turkey to Ninewa through Habur Gate. We defer to Embassy Ankara's views on these matters, but Botsali's listing of GOT concerns suggest Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) issues enduringly cloud both problems. End summary.

Hello, neighbor!

¶2. (C) Botsali's primary agenda was to establish ground rules for his Consulate's dealings with our PRT and Coalition forces in Ninewa. He clearly hoped for a high level of support from Coalition forces and assets as his Consulate begins operations -- specifically Coalition quick-reaction force availability in case of insurgent attack on his Consulate; U.S. military emergency medical support for Consular staff; and use of FOB Marez as a safehaven for Consulate staff. Team Leader Knight emphasized that in such cases Coalition forces and the PRT will of course provide emergency assistance to the extent possible, but cannot promise more than that; Botsali eventually concurred.

¶3. (C) Team Leader Knight then addressed other administrative issues, including FOB Marez security requirements, general security issues, Consular privileges and immunities, and transportation matters related to more regular GOT flights into Mosul Airfield (MAF). Regarding Consulate FOB access, Team Leader Knight pointed out that while Consular immunities do mean FOB authorities cannot require physical inspection of Consular staff, vehicles, and cargo, access to the FOB can be denied if such inspections are declined.

¶4. (C) Botsali agreed to these considerations, and eventually emphasized that he is the GOT CG accredited to the GOI, not the Coalition, and understands the difference. On more general security matters, Team Leader Knight noted that

Ninewa Provincial Director of Police MG Wathiq is the Consulate's primary contact for such issues.

15. (C) Team Leader Knight observed the confusion which arose from Turkish authorities' failure to coordinate the arrival of the GOT aircraft bringing Botsali to MAF 10 Feb, and the obvious need to regularize FOB access procedures for Consulate staff and vehicles and other aspects of managing more regular GOT flights which are anticipated into MAF. Botsali apologized for failing to notify us of the aircraft's arrival time. He indicated that he expects a stop at MAF will be added to the itinerary of the regular GOT support flight to Baghdad, which is now scheduled every six weeks or so; additional flights for humanitarian aid may also be planned.

16. (C) Team Leader Knight pointed out that Coalition forces and FOB authorities cannot continue to provide the kind of logistical support GOT flights into MAF have so far required. Botsali agreed that these matters will be discussed between Consulate administrative staff and FOB management on an urgent basis to assure their resolution before further GOT flights into MAF.

Makhmur Camp is still a problem . . .

17. (C) Team Leader Knight discussed some unfortunate recent Turkish press coverage of events at the Makhmur UNHCR refugee camp housing families of Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members. Botsali observed at length that the PKK is a strong

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and rising threat in Turkey, and that he does not believe that the PKK does not have weapons at Makhmur -- residents are just very good at hiding them when the camp is searched.

18. (C) However, Botsali agreed that Makhmur residents who are genuinely refugees are welcome to return to Turkey, although screening for 'terrorists' and those facing criminal charges will be necessary. One new issue he noted is that military-age males holding Turkish citizenship are subject to prosecution for evading mandatory military service (which would probably apply to all military-age males currently resident in Makhmur camp). Botsali promised to ask Ankara for clarification of the current GOT position on the camp ASAP.

. . . which is tied to Turkish fuel deliveries

19. (C) Team Leader Knight then asked Botsali about the lack of adequate fuel deliveries from Turkey, especially kerosene and LPG. Botsali pointed out that the issue is not simply a question of contracts and payments, but that fuel deliveries to northern Iraq have become embroiled in Turkish domestic politics. Per Botsali, the current GOT is loathe to be portrayed as supporting the KRG and northern Iraq while the PKK remains a critical threat. Botsali indicated that once Makhmur camp is closed and the PKK in Iraq neutralized in a fashion acceptable to the GOT, fuel will again begin to flow to Iraq in reasonable volume.

Comment

10. (C) This meeting was very cordial, and apparently contained Botsali's expectations

regarding special Coalition support for his Consulate operations. However, Consulate access to MAF and a regularized non-Coalition logistical system for more frequent GOT flights into MAF remain to be resolved.

¶11. (C) Comment continued: It is unfortunate if Botsali is correct that the Makhmur issue has become part of Ninewa's fuel problem, and equally unfortunate if his portrayal of the issues surrounding repatriation of Makhmur camp residents means that progress towards closing the camp will remain blocked. We look forward to Embassy Ankara's clarification of these matters. End comment.
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